

Hamburger Erklärung 2022 [Hamburg Declaration]

To globally end high-risk "gain-of-function" research on pathogens with global pandemic potential.

22th February 2022

Translated from original German version with deepl.com

Conscious of the mission and responsibility of science and research to serve the welfare of humankind, to strive for truth and to communicate the knowledge gained to the general public, the signatories to this Declaration wish to draw attention to a major threat to human existence that has arisen in recent years as a result of novel biotechnological processes for modifying dangerous pathogens.

Through so-called gain-of-function research, naturally occurring viruses are adapted through changes in the gene sequence in such a way that their docking with and invasion of human cells is facilitated. This creates an enormous potential for a pandemic, which responsible scientists have repeatedly pointed out over the past ten years. Such research has been conducted in recent years on various highly dangerous pathogens such as avian flu viruses and SARS-like coronaviruses, which is documented in the literature. Much of this work was also done in the context of publicly funded research projects.

The current Corona pandemic clearly demonstrates what it means when pathogens are extremely easily transmitted from person to person. Millions of people around the world have died and billions of people have lost or lost their livelihoods altogether. The enormous damage to humanity occurred even though the mortality rate of the SARS-CoV-2 virus is only in the percentage range. There is evidence that in various biotechnology laboratories of the world much more dangerous viruses like MERS, Ebola, or Nipah viruses are being genetically engineered. The outcome of such experiments is often difficult or impossible to predict. However, no biotechnology laboratory in the world is safe enough to guarantee that such genetically modified viruses will not escape. A catastrophic event could be fatal for a substantial proportion of the world's population, especially if transmissibility of highly dangerous viruses through the human respiratory tract is facilitated by genetic modification.

We as scientists are aware of the importance of the freedom of science and research. Nevertheless, we appeal to all politicians around the world to ensure that this "gain-of-function" research on pathogens with global pandemic potential ends immediately. The risk associated with this research and the potential for the extinction of large portions of the world's population are no longer acceptable. We demand that the stop be controlled and continuously monitored by an independent international supervisory authority.

Irrespective of the form of government of the countries of this world, it must be the concern of every responsibly acting leader to contribute to the well-being of the population of their own country, but also to humanity as a whole. Man has learned to intervene in the basic molecular building blocks of life. This gives rise to many opportunities to improve human life, but also to a great responsibility to preserve creation. Let us take this responsibility seriously before it is too late.

Roland Wiesendanger, Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c., Nanoscientist, University of Hamburg, Germany (Organizer)
Hiroshi Arakawa, Dr., Institute of Molecular Oncology, IFOM, Milan, Italy
Ute Bergner, Dr., Physicist, Jena, Germany
Valentin Bruttel, Dr., Immunologist, University of Würzburg, Germany

Lounes Chikhi, Dr., Population Geneticist, CNRS, Toulouse University, Paul Sabatier, France
 Jean-Michel Claverie, Prof. Dr., Dept. of Medicine, Aix-Marseille University, Marseille, France
 Fabien Colombo, Communication and Sociology of Science, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France
 Malcolm Dando, Prof. Dr., Section of Peace Studies and International Development, University of
 Bradford, United Kingdom
 Étienne Decroly, Prof. Dr., Member of the Board of Directors of the French Virology Society, CNRS
 Director of Research, AFMB lab, UMR7257, Aix Marseille Université, Marseille, France
 Gilles Demaneuf, Engineer and Data Scientist, Auckland, New Zealand
 Richard Dronskowski, Prof. Dr., Institute of Inorganic Chemistry, RWTH Aachen, Germany
 Lucia Dunn, PhD, Professor of Economics, The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA
 Frank Fehrenbach, Prof. Dr., Faculty of Humanities, University of Hamburg, Germany
 André Goffinet, Prof. Dr., Neurobiology, University of Louvain, Belgium
 Ingrid Gogolin, Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult., Department of General, Intercultural and International
 Comparative Education & Educational Psychology, University of Hamburg, Germany
 Mai He, Prof. Dr., School of Medicine, Washington University, St. Louis, USA
 Martina Hentschel, Prof. Dr., Institute of Physics, TU Chemnitz, Germany
 Michael Hietschold, Prof. Dr., Institute of Physics, TU Chemnitz, Germany
 Burkard Hillebrands, Prof. Dr., Dept. of Physics, TU Kaiserslautern, Germany
 Florence Janody, Dr., i3S-Institute for Research and Innovation in Health, University of Porto,
 Portugal
 Bernd Kaina, Prof. Dr., Institute of Toxicology, University of Mainz, Germany
 Hideki Kakeya, Prof. Dr., School of Science and Technology, University of Tsukuba, Japan
 Bernd Kretschmer, Dr. h.c., Physicist, Freiburg i. Brsg., Germany
 Franz Kreupl, Prof. Dr., Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering, TU Munich, Germany
 Jonathan Latham, PhD, Executive Director, The Bioscience Resource Project, Ithaca, New York, USA
 Milton Leitenberg, Senior Research Fellow, Center for International and Security Studies, University
 of Maryland, USA
 Alexander Lerchl, Prof. Dr., Biology and Ethics of Science & Technology, Jacobs University Bremen,
 Germany
 Steven Massey, Prof. Dr., Dept. of Biology, University of Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico
 Paul-Antoine Miquel, Prof. Dr., Contemporary Biology, Toulouse 2 University, France
 Sven-Olaf Moch, Prof. Dr., II. Institute of Theoretical Physics, University of Hamburg, Germany
 Michael Morrissey, Dr., Lecturer for English Studies, University of Kassel, Germany
 Peter Oppeneer, Prof. Dr., Dept. of Physics and Astronomy, Uppsala University, Sweden
 Anja Pistor-Hatam, Prof. Dr., Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Kiel, Germany
 Steven Quay, MD, PhD, Former Faculty, Stanford University School of Medicine, USA
 Monali Rahalkar, Dr., Microbiologist, Agharkar Research Institute, Pune, India
 Bahulika Rahul, Dr., Plant Genetics and Taxonomy Expert, Development Research Foundation,
 Pune,
 India
 Jürgen Schmitt, Prof. Dr., Dept. of Physics, University of Hamburg, Germany
 Nariyoshi Shinomiya, Prof. Dr., President of the National Defense Medical College, Saitama, Japan
 Michael Stuke, Prof. Dr., Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry, Göttingen, Germany
 Günter Theißen, Prof. Dr., Geneticist, University of Jena, Germany
 André Thess, Prof. Dr., Engineering Sciences, University of Stuttgart, Germany
 Ronny Thomale, Prof. Dr., I. Institute of Theoretical Physics, University of Würzburg, Germany
 Michael Thorwart, Prof. Dr., I. Institute of Theoretical Physics, University of Hamburg, Germany
 Rémi Tournabize, Dr., Genetics and Human Evolutionary Biology, Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência,
 Oeiras, Portugal
 Frank Wilhelm, Prof. Dr., Clinical Psychology, University of Salzburg, Austria
 Allison Wilson, PhD, Science Director, The Bioscience Resource Project, Ithaca, New York, USA
 Michael Winklhofer, Prof. Dr., Institute for Biology and Environmental Sciences, University of
 Oldenburg, Germa